



Summer/Fall 2019

Greetings from the Health Services Chief Professional Officer

Dear Fellow Officers,

It was a pleasure meeting many of my Health Services Officers at the USPHS Scientific & Training Symposium in Minneapolis this year! We had a wonderful Category Day that was highly interactive and filled with opportunities to network. I do want to acknowledge our HSPAC and PAG award recipients that were recognized during Category Day. Also, my heartiest thank you to the HSPAC Category Day Planning Committee for a job well done! The meeting is a great way for us to stay connected and I think we are all looking forward to the 2020 meeting in Arizona.



CAPT Jeanean Willis Marsh
Chief Professional Officer

This 2019 combined Summer/Fall edition of the HSPAC Quarterly Newsletter is an excellent way for our category to promote esprit de corps, information exchange, and keep abreast of what's going on in the Commissioned Corps. The newsletter also covers a variety of topics such as career progression and promotion, the value of mentoring, readiness resources, leadership tips, and much more.

Inside This Issue:

Welcome from the HS CPO	1
HSPAC Chair's Corner	3
Career Progression and Promotion Guidance (CP2G)	4
Communications Connection	5
Community Wellness	6
Policy Updates	7
Mentoring Matters	7
Readiness Recharge	8
Special Initiatives and Awareness	9
HSOs in Action	10
Kudos Corner	14
Leadership Circle	15
USPHS Scientific & Training Symposium	18
Announcements	23

2019 Executive Committee Members

Chair: CDR Simleen Kaur
Executive Secretary: LCDR Aaron Grober
Executive Recorder: LT Stephanie Chiang

2019 Subcommittee Chairs (*Non-Voting Members)

Committee	Chair	Co-Chair
Analytics	LCDR Roberto Garza	LCDR Alex Freiman*
Awards	CAPT Jyl Martin	CDR Sara Azimi-Bolourian
Career Development	LCDR Elizabeth Goodger	CDR Pieter Van Horn CDR Karen Chaves
Communications	CDR Elizabeth Garza	LCDR Felicia Warren*
Community Wellness	CAPT Malaysia Harrell	LCDR Latasha Turner*
Events	CDR Margaret Caulk	CDR Cynthia White
Membership	CDR Neelam Ghiya	CDR Kristin Kelly
Mentoring	CDR Catherine Beer	CDR David Hunter
Policy	CDR Anthony Johnson	CDR Joel Richardson
Readiness	LCDR Nicole Bell	LCDR Thomas Maruna*
Recruitment	LCDR Marquita Burnett	CDR Martin Guardia
Special Assignments	CDR Zanethia Eubanks	

Save the Date: HSPAC Holiday Luncheon

Friday, December 13, 2019
 1230 – 1500 EST
 Positano Ristorante Italiano
 4948 Fairmont Ave
 Bethesda, MD 20814

[RSVP](#) by November 15, 2019

Please join us in congratulating the
HSPAC 2020-2022 Voting Members

Officer	Agency
CDR Rebecca Bunnell	CMS
CDR Brook Kerns	FDA
CDR Jonathan Kwan	FDA
CDR Monique Salter	FDA
LCDR Alex Freiman	ACF

Greetings from the Health Services Chief Professional Officer (cont'd)

This high-quality publication is a direct reflection of the tremendous amount of work and the committee's dedication to serve our fellow officers.

We are fortunate to have phenomenal subcommittees that have developed important products and activities to support our officers such as the Policy Subcommittee's Compilation of Commissioned Corps. The Readiness Subcommittee continues to provide important readiness resources that are routinely shared across the Commissioned Corps. We have seen the positive impact as our readiness numbers have reached over 95%. Recently, the Membership Subcommittee released the Active Participant Database that will greatly improve an officer's ability to become involved in the HSPAC. For our new officers, the Recruitment and Retention Subcommittee launched the inauguration of the Call to Active Duty (CAD) Orientation as yet another resource to not only to get and stay connected but to ensure they have the tools and support to lay the foundation for a successful career as an officer and public health professional.

As we move toward a more modern Corps, professional development is a key component to meeting the increasing expectation that officers advance in their careers as executive leaders in public health. After months of diligent hard work, the Career Development Subcommittee is very excited to present the HSPAC Professional Core Competency Program, a professional skill-building program. The program toolkit is an easy, how-to guide and roadmap designed to help you develop executive skills as a leader in public health. To learn more about how the program works, we invite you to attend an upcoming webinar.

Morning Sessions

Session 1: October 28, 2019
1130 – 1300 ET

Session 2: November 6, 2019
1130 – 1300 ET

Evening Sessions

Session 3: October 30, 2019
1930 – 2100 ET

Session 4: November 13, 2019
1930 – 2100 ET

This has been a year of many successes because of the countless hours, commitment, and good works of so many officers. I am proud that the HSPAC continues to lead in so many ways because we are a great team and we are CorpsSTRONG!

Yours in Service,

CAPT Jeanean Willis Marsh



CAPT Jeanean Willis Marsh
Chief Professional Officer

2019 HSPAC Chair's Corner

Dear Health Service Officers,

It was an immense pleasure to meet my fellow Health Services Officers (HSOs) at our Category Day on May 8th, 2019 at the USPHS Scientific & Training Symposium. On behalf of all of us, I would like to thank the Events Subcommittee's Category Day Planning Team for organizing such a special day for all of us. The Category Day was full of interactive sessions and engaged officers in meaningful conversations. There was ample opportunity to network and get the landscape overview of HSPAC ongoing initiatives. This summer, we completed rank-specific Townhall meetings which were a success! The webconference sessions of the All Hands meetings, rank-specific Townhall meetings, and the presentations for the 2019 Category Day can be accessed on the [HSPAC All Hands Meetings website](#).

I want to take this opportunity to provide a few notable updates on HSPAC activities over the past two quarters, I am excited to see that we continue to make progress in our operations by increasing **Partnership**, advancing career **Progression**, and improving **Preparedness**.

1. We have introduced a new monthly message "**Five Things You Should Know**" to keep our officers abreast of the array of resources available and various activities taking place within and outside of the HSPAC. We are also making strides in **improving collaboration**. One prime example is a collaboration between HSPAC Community Wellness Subcommittee and our Operation Corps Strong workgroup on suicide prevention campaign by reaching out to communities and our officers, respectively.
2. Our new **active participant database** was released in August. It serves as a one-stop-shop for our officers to access volunteer opportunities within the HSPAC.
3. The **Professional Core Competencies Program** is a unique and targeted career development strategy designed to improve and build skills for executive leaders in public health. Webinars are planned to implement the program across our Category. Based on the feedback received on the **Career Progression and Promotion Guide (CP₂G)** toolkit, PY2020 promotion documents are now ready for our officers for the next promotion cycle.

We are developing tools that will prepare HSOs for the forefront and adapt to the changing dynamics of the Commissioned Corps. Our Readiness Subcommittee has rolled out a few resources as follows that can be found on the HSPAC Readiness Subcommittee Readiness Resources [website](#):



CDR Simleen Kaur

2019 Chair, Health Services Professional
Advisory Committee

- **Deployment Guide** - tips for general considerations pre and post deployment;
- **Uniform Guide** - our first video guide on history, components, and proper wear instructions for the Operational Dress Uniform (ODU); and
- **Readiness Resource Guide** - basic readiness requirements and a way to ask the Readiness Subcommittee follow-up questions.

We worked very closely with PAGs to finalize competencies and training for **discipline-specific deployment roles** to well-prepare and train our officers. Stay tuned for more information on this.

Our [Operation Corps Strong workgroup](#) developed a resilience-focused program for USPHS officers and their families and innovative initiatives focused on deployment resilience, suicide prevention, officer and family support.

I want to reiterate my gratitude towards every one of you for your unwavering dedication and commitment to your agency and Commissioned Corps mission. Your service is truly invaluable!

Career Progression and Promotion Guidance (CP₂G)

Resources for Career Development

The initial rollout of the Promotion Year (PY) 2020 CP₂G Toolkit has been posted on our website including minor updates to the Official HS Category Curriculum Vitae (CV) Format Instructions, Official HS Category CV Sample Template, and the PY2020 Benchmarks. Additional updates, including Officer Statement (OS)/ Reviewing Official Statement (ROS) guidance, and best practices are also available.



Career Development

[Career Progression and Promotion Guidance \(CP₂G\) Toolkit](#)

The toolkit provides a comprehensive resource repository of guidance documents to assist HSOs with promotion preparation and career progression. The toolkit consists of 2 sections:

1. Promotion Preparation

Required documents and guidance documents to assist officers as they prepare for promotion.

2. Career Progression

- Additional support documents for use during promotion preparation.
- Resources that can benefit an officer at any stage of their career to ensure career growth and development.

[Job Applicant CV](#)

The Job Applicant CV was created to serve as a guide when applying for jobs and should represent your professional career. It is not a required document for the Category. **Please note that this is not the Official HS Category CV that is required for category business, promotion, and the CV that should be placed in your eOPF.**

[Job Interview Tip Sheet](#)

This tip sheet provides information that is intended to inform and assist officers with steps to be well prepared before, during, and after an interview for a new position. It is for informational purposes only and carries no guarantee of success.

Additional reference documents, visit the [HSPAC Resources for Health Service Officers page](#).



Communications Connection

Special Edition Ebola Book Update

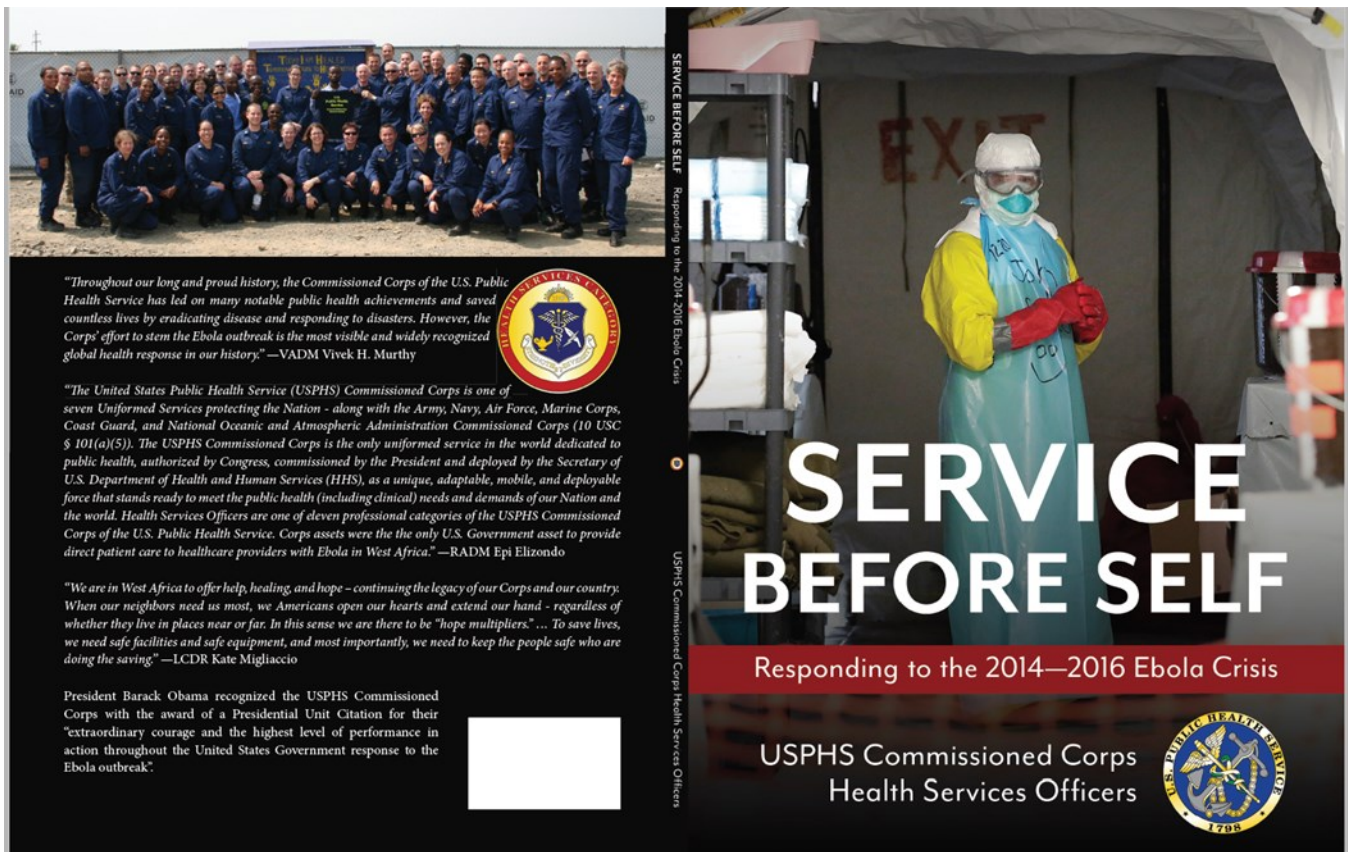
Knowing how excited many of you are, as identified through the responses to our early interest [survey](#), the HSPAC Communications Subcommittee Special Edition Team would like to provide you with an update about this work. Special thanks to our copy editor, Ms. Amy Carlin, who helped us with editing the final text.

The Special Edition Team leadership reviewed the edits and transitioned files to the layout and graphic designer. Once the final prototype was completed, the Office of the Surgeon General reviewed and provided final clearance. Our goal is a late fall publication just in time for your holiday shopping. What better gift to give than a piece of Commissioned Corps history? This volume is an absolute must read and with its spectacular cover design (see prototype below) it will look amazing displayed on coffee tables and on bookshelves.

Many of you have asked about the book sales, expressing interest in understanding how the profits made might be used. Profits will go to the Commissioned Officers Foundation (COF), who will provide scholarships for future USPHS Scientific and Training Symposia and to future response publication efforts such as this one. We hope you will agree these are great causes to advance learning and promote the visibility of the Commissioned Corps.



Communications



Community Wellness

The Inaugural Wellness Room at the 2019 USPHS Scientific and Training Symposium

CAPT Malaysia Gresham Harrell, LCDR Latasha Turner, and LT Jennifer Weekes

The HSPAC Community Wellness Subcommittee, in collaboration with Resilience Through Meditation, Nurse PAC, Dieticians, and Therapists, hosted the first-ever Wellness Room, called the "Corps Oasis," during the 2019 USPHS Scientific & Training Symposium in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

The Wellness Room offered wellness information and resources such as on-demand life skills coaching; educational materials on suicide prevention, diet, and exercise, domestic violence, mental and emotional wellbeing, and self-care; blood pressure checks; meditation sessions (with and without Tibetan bells); yoga sessions; massages and other relaxation exercises; spirituality in working with first responders; and healthy snacks with positive messages and affirmations to USPHS leaders, officers, family members, and other professionals who attended the Symposium.

The Wellness Room was available Monday and Tuesday afternoon. Approximately 200 participants benefited from the sessions and activities. Following the Symposium's opening ceremony, USPHS senior leadership including the Assistance Secretary for Health, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Health, Surgeon General, and Deputy Surgeon General visited the Wellness Room and participated in the mindfulness meditation sessions. The resources offered and experiences of the supportive community environment was well received.

The HSPAC Community Wellness Committee team appreciates all who volunteered to plan and execute this highly successful event. We look forward to providing this wellness resource next year in Arizona. If you would like to volunteer or have ideas, feedback, and comments, please contact the Community Wellness Subcommittee Chair/Co-Chair: [CAPT Malaysia Gresham Harrell](#) and [LCDR Latasha Turner](#).



Policy Updates and Mentoring Matters

Policy Updates

The 2019 HSPAC operational year has advanced at a fast pace. Modernization is the theme as the focus is to ensure our Commissioned Corps operations align with our core values: leadership, service, integrity and excellence. The HSPAC Policy and Procedures Subcommittee remains focused on our 2019 operational strategy: ***“Policy and Procedures: From Information to Application.”***

We understand operational excellence is initiated through policy which provides governance and guidelines to promote effectiveness. Below is a summary of the [HSPAC Policy Reference Guide v1.0](#).

What: The HSPAC Policy Reference Guide is a robust document detailing all Commissioned Corps Management Information System (CCMIS) policy issuances in a user-friendly format.

Why: The guide was developed to enhance officer resources and maintain avenues to improve officer efficiency and effectiveness.

Next Steps: The guide will be updated annually to include modifications and additions to policies, procedures, and information governing personnel management of the Commissioned Corps.



Mentoring Matters

The HSPAC Mentoring Subcommittee’s External Relations Team hosted HSO career counseling sessions in collaboration with the Career Development Subcommittee during the USPHS Scientific & Training Symposium. Led by CAPT Raquel Peat, the team recruited 36 senior HSOs as mentors and 16 senior HS officers provided valuable advice to 32 HSOs during the sessions. Senior HS officers who have served on promotion boards and/or have mentored HS officers served as counselors and reviewed Career Progression and Promotion Guidance (CP₂G), HSO benchmarks, components of the CV, best practices, promotion calculator, Officer Statement and Reviewing Officer Statement guidelines to allow for personalized general guidance on career growth.

Whether an officer had a mentor in the official HS Mentoring Program or was just looking for a second opinion, the 2-hour event was an excellent opportunity for officers to receive career advice from a senior HSO, network, and learn from each other. Additionally, HSOs got an opportunity to meet the HSO Chief Professional Officer, CAPT Jeanean Willis Marsh, and HSPAC Chair, CDR Simleen Kaur, during the HSO career counseling session.

Officers interested in identifying a mentor or mentee or joining the HSPAC official Mentoring Program should visit the [HSPAC Mentoring Program website](#).



Readiness Recharge

New Readiness Resources

Are you looking for [readiness resources](#)? Below is a consolidated list of resources that are sure to help with maintaining basic readiness, preparing for your next deployment, or enhancing critical skills.

Deployment Guide

The [HSPAC Deployment Guide](#) provides tips and recommendations for preparing for deployment.

ODU Uniform Guide Video

A [recording](#) of the history, components, and proper wear instructions for the Operational Dress Uniform (ODU). Recordings for additional uniforms are forthcoming.

Readiness Resource Guide

The [Readiness Resource Guide](#) provides a mechanism to ask follow-up questions about basic readiness.

Advanced Readiness Program

Major changes to program include:

- New time-in-service requirement
- ARP components: Deployment Readiness, Technical Readiness, Field Readiness
- Field readiness component can be satisfied by awarded FMRB, completion of FMRB courses, or completed agency/RedDOG deployment.



Using Technology to Provide Continuing Education Opportunities

LCDR Tracy Tilghman

Continuing education (CE) is a requirement for many Commissioned Corps officers. For HSOs specifically, obtaining CEs may be a challenge when it is not tied to a specific license, but rather a complementary expertise or credential. For the past two years, the Public Health Service Professional Advisory Group (PHPAG) Health Promotion and Health Education Team (HPHE) ventured to change this notion by coordinating a group offering CEs virtually through the American Public Health Association (APHA) online platform, *APHA Live*.

APHA hosts an annual public health conference that brings together public health professionals from across the country and world to convene, engage, learn, and network on public health issues, policies, and best practices. In an effort to broaden their reach, APHA introduced an online version of their conference through a platform titled APHA Live. APHA Live is a streaming and on-demand broadcast platform that allows virtual attendees the opportunity to watch 14 premier sessions and obtain up to 19 CEs. Participants are able to obtain CEs in each of the following: MCHES®, CHES®, CME, CNE, CPH, and OP (per licensing/certification board approval).

HPHE collaborates with the PHPAG's Education, Training, and Mentoring (ETM) Generalist Team and APHA directly to bring this opportunity to as many Commissioned Corps officers as possible. This initiative, which was piloted in 2017, enabled over 100 officers from the Health Services, Nursing, and Medical categories to obtain CEs. In 2018, roughly 150 officers across the Commissioned Corps participated. This year, we anticipate doubling that amount due to increased demand and need for CEs. The cost for APHA Live in 2019, including access to the 14 premier sessions and up to 19 CEs, cost about \$15.96 per person. To participate, officers will need to RSVP to the provided website and make a payment via the preferred mechanism (such as PayPal or Venmo). They will receive an email with an icon/link that will provide access to the live conference or the sessions on demand. The best thing about APHA Live is that it is available on-demand for up to a year from the date of the conference.

For more information on APHA, their annual conference, and the variety of projects and opportunities they offer, please visit www.apha.org. As we continue to collaborate with APHA to bring APHA Live to officers, we hope to work with other organizations and groups who may be interested in using a similar platform to offer CEs via streaming or on-demand. For more information on these endeavors or our work providing APHA Live to officers, please contact the [PHPAG HPHE Team](#).

HSOs in Action

USPHS Educates Parents and Teens at Baseball Game on Dangers of Vaping and Opioids

CDR Stephen C. Smith

On April 18, 2019, a cold mist fell on the field as the umpire yelled "batter up." Next to the dugout, a batter swung his last warm up swing and sauntered to the plate. In less than 24 hours, the day's temperature of 47 degrees, cold, wet, and clammy, would rise to 76 degrees, but for the moment such was the weather in Manchester, New Hampshire. Today, at this minor league baseball game, the Hartford Yard Goats would be playing against our Fisher Cats, a Toronto Blue Jays Double-A affiliate team. As spectators arrived, our team of seven USPHS officers were ready to carry out our mission to spread the word about the dangers of opioid use and vaping. We hoped to "steal" a few moments of the fans' time, "throw" a few ideas their way, and to "strike out" even one person on the wrong path of abuse.

Manchester could be a city in any state where drug and nicotine use is on the rise. On this overcast night, our team of USPHS officers were ready to talk to parents and teens about opioid and nicotine use, ask open ended questions, and share education materials on the products. The Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) invited us to set up a table near the concession stands right behind home plate. Several USPHS officers passed out pamphlets as others stood ready at the table with informative brochures and various vaping devices. Curious teens, and even kids as young as ten, made their way up to the table. Despite the fact that these devices are illegal to minors (actual age varies state to state), the kids were all too familiar with them. They knew which buttons to push to heat up the oils that would produce the smoke filled with nicotine and other unregulated additives. Little is known about the effects of higher doses of nicotine on the growing brain, which makes the increased use of these products even more dangerous. Parents also came up and took a moment to learn about the devices that their kids may be using and how to initiate a conversation with their children and teens if they were to find any of the devices.

USPHS was there to reach out to kids who may not fully understand the risks they are taking by using these devices and to help parents become more knowledgeable.



(From left to right): CAPT Burnham, CDR Emerson, CDR Labrecque, and CDR Smith.

HSOs in Action

A Peek into Overseas Assignments

CAPT Douan Kirivong

Have you ever dreamed of going overseas, exploring different parts of the world, working with different countries, and getting closer to the populations you want to serve? Although most of our assignments are domestic, there are some postings overseas. My first CDC overseas assignment was in Bangkok, Thailand in the CDC Southeast Asia Regional Office. I spent over six years developing our CDC local staff capacity, working with Thai Ministry of Health, managing our cooperative agreement for health collaboration and advancing Global Health Security Agenda for the region. During this tour, I learned to speak, read, and write in Thai and I was deployed twice to support the Ebola response in Guinea. My family really enjoyed this assignment, as cost of living was low, allowing a very comfortable lifestyle and ability to travel in the region. Our kids went to an international school. We lived in an expatriate community and got around on our bicycles and golf cart. The friendships we made endured despite the geographic distance that grew



Celebrating 35 years of the Field Epidemiology Training Program in Thailand

between us.



Construction of BSL-3 Laboratory in Barbados

Next, I spent two years in Barbados before our CDC Caribbean Regional Office relocated to Jamaica. I served as Contracting Officer Representative (COR) for a laboratory construction project and project officer for 16 cooperative agreements with Ministries of Health in the region, other local and international partners, and oversaw the office transition. This assignment allowed me to work not only with partners in Barbados, but also in Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana, Suriname, Jamaica, and Bahamas.

For a year now, I have been in Jamaica, where I completed my Peace Corps assignment over 20 years ago. Upon arrival, I was responsible for establishing a new CDC office. This required securing office space, office configuration, developing our staff resources (recruitment), and establishing office procedures. Our goals are to get people living with HIV treated and virally suppressed, and to achieve epidemic control in the Caribbean. Unlike Thailand, where our office is co-located with the Ministry of Health, here we are embedded at the U.S. Embassy. The most rewarding experience thus far has been returning to my Peace Corps community and feeling the impact of the legacy I left behind.

Overseas assignments aren't for everyone. We leave behind the many conveniences of the U.S. and must practice cultural patience and safety precautions. However, these experiences stretch and change us forever and build diversity and resiliency in our children.



CAPT Kirivong (middle) visits local community in Jamaica where she served in Peace Corps.

HSOs in Action

Tips for Officers Interested in Detail Position: An HSO's Experience Responding to the Zika Virus Outbreak

CDR Julia Bryan

In September 2016, the U.S. Congress appropriated \$932 million through the Zika Response and Preparedness Act to HHS to respond to the outbreak, develop vaccines, and reimburse for healthcare costs. The Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services (CMS) received \$75 million to support the reimbursement of healthcare costs related to the Zika virus (GAO 2018). I was selected by Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) leadership to serve as Technical Advisor to the Zika Grant Implementation Team for a 120-day detail at CMS. While at CMS, I was able to provide technical assistance during the funding opportunity development, award and implementation phases, coordinate the phases with internal and external partners in HHS, CDC, and HRSA as well as CMS's Office of Financial Management and Office of Acquisitions and Grants Management, offer subject matter experience related to health care services, delivery systems and grant administration, and provide input and guidance to the context and administration of grants management and contracts.

Here are lessons I learned from this detail that may be helpful during your next detail or deployment:

- **Be Ready!** Similar to deployments, details may require you to begin in less than 72 hours. The request for the CMS detail came to HRSA on September 30, 2016 and I began my detail on October 4, 2016. Remember to notify your supervisor, colleagues, deployment team, and key contacts for Commissioned Corps activities about your detail as it may affect your ability to be responsive and/or complete tasks. I developed a transition document for my supervisor and colleagues to help identify and disseminate key activities while I was away. Lastly, be ready to hit the ground running. Zika was a time sensitive, public health emergency and required immediate attention. As a result, a pre-award process that normally takes over 6 months to complete was accomplished in half the time.
- **Fully Commit!** Details are unique opportunities ranging from a couple of months to over a year that allow you to apply your knowledge and skills in a different setting. This means that you have to transition your work and attention from your duty station to your detail duty station. Take advantage of learning the new office or agency, fully engage in the experience, and make new connections. It is unrealistic to keep your focus on two full-time positions. I tried and it did not work!
- **Be Flexible!** You will be entering a new environment and will need to learn and adapt to different organizational processes, structure and culture. Your detail may also require you to adjust your work hours, commute, and scheduled leave. During my detail to CMS, my commute increased by almost an hour each way. I also gave up my alternative work schedule to ensure we were able to meet the established timelines.
- **Remember the Mission!** Stay positive! Your detail may include long, stressful days and involve a growing list of pending actions to complete, managing through multiple levels of approval for these actions and mitigating around missed deadlines. It is on these days especially that you remember why you are on your detail- the mission. Our mission was to provide critical healthcare services related to the Zika virus as quickly as possible. As a result, the team was able to make timely awards to ensure access to these services for 23.6 million people, including the 26,000 people with active/local Zika cases.

Government Accountability Office. (2018). GAO-18-389 Zika Supplemental Funding- Status of HHS Agencies' Obligations, Disbursements, and the Activities Funded. Retrieved from: <https://www.gao.gov/assets/700/691740.pdf>.

HSOs in Action

Contributions and Experiences during the 2019 Minneapolis RAM

LT Candice Karber, LT Marie Cetoute, and LCDR Vickie Ellis

USPHS officers had the opportunity to participate in the Minneapolis Remote Area Medical (RAM) event at the Salvation Army Harbor Light Center (SAHLC). The RAM was held prior to the USPHS & Training Symposium. The RAM's mission focused on providing quality dental and optometry care to vulnerable and underserved residents of the Minneapolis community. The event took place over three days and there were well over 60 USPHS officers present. Direct services were provided all day Saturday and into Sunday afternoon. Officers provided care to more than 300 patients and rendered over \$130,000 worth of services.

Considering the specific focus of the Minneapolis RAM, one might assume that only specific disciplines would participate, however there were a variety of USPHS disciplines represented. For example, there were scientists, pharmacists, and licensed clinical social workers (LCSW). This article will highlight four LCSWs who volunteered and served in clinical supportive roles within the dental and optometry sections. The LCSWs have an array of clinical mental health expertise and an abundance of volunteer experience; however because of this RAM event they had the opportunity to broaden their skills.



(From left to right): LT Marie Cetoute, LT Candice Karber, LT Angela McClendon, and LCDR Vickie Ellis.

Since many patients had gone several years without proper eye care, the overall health of their eyes was prioritized. Residents of the SAHLC and community members received dilated eye exams, were tested for diabetic retinopathy, and glaucoma. Patients were also measured for eyeglasses. Once distance and reading prescriptions were assessed, donated optical frames were selected by the patients. Then, the glasses making process began inside the RAM bus. Officers who were assigned to the RAM bus used an array of optical machinery to produce eyeglasses on-site. One of the LCSWs was a member of the optometry area where over 150 pairs of glasses were produced. She was primarily assigned to the blocking machine, which involved a process where semi-finished lenses were clamped before going through several other steps to produce eyeglasses. Additional steps included the operation of complex optical machinery, cutting lenses to the desired frame, and quality assurance. With attention to detail and care toward each pair of glasses, there were less than 10 pairs returned for reproduction.

Three LCSWs offered general support in separate areas. One provided assistance to the dentist by rendering and holding necessary equipment during the procedure. Another served in the group affectionately called the *bucket brigade* responsible for quickly disinfecting the immediate area of the dental chair where services were rendered. The role also involved emptying the sputum bucket, providing fresh water, and promptly sanitized dental equipment so the next patient could be served. Another served in the sanitation area where the used dental equipment was received. Members of that area were instrumental in quickly separating and cleaning equipment for reuse by sanitizing through high temperature machines as well as disinfecting wipes.

Overall, the experience was humbling and provided a greater sense of appreciation and gratitude. We encourage all officers to volunteer at RAM events when possible. In doing so, it is a great way to give back to the community, connect with other USPHS officers, and build camaraderie with local RAM volunteers. Also, such relationships provide the opportunity for visibility of the Corps' mission one community at a time.

Kudos Corner

2019 PACE Outstanding Engagement Award

LCDR Dondzila received the first-ever PACE Outstanding Community Engagement Award for exemplary leadership implementing the U.S. Surgeon General's initiatives.

In April 2019, the National Prevention through Active Community Engagement (PACE) Program awarded the Outstanding Community Engagement Award to LCDR Tara Dondzila. This year marked the first annual awards offered by PACE to USPHS officers or groups of officers having impactful community service and engagement through exemplary leadership in implementing the Surgeon General's initiatives and prevention strategies outlined in the National Prevention Strategy. The main purpose of the award was to honor collaborations between USPHS officers and federal, state, and local public health partners.

The award recognizes LCDR Dondzila's efforts to form and sustain public health partnerships during her assignment with the National Park Service and also her work empowering USPHS officers in HHS Regions 8 and 9 to engage in public health community education activities. As a result of her work in Region 9, LCDR Dondzila improved access to health care and increased physical and mental well-being for Bay Area residents using the Park Prescription platform. LCDR Dondzila and the Institute at the Golden Gate were integral to the planning and implementation of the 2017 Park Prescription Day event. About 135 HHS, Golden Gate COA members, and local partners came to the event to share health resources and lead fitness activities in San Francisco. Additionally, the award recognizes LCDR Dondzila's efforts to educate and empower fellow officers to participate in and conduct their own PACE events. As a result of her work, at least 45 officers have participated in or led PACE events in the Bay Area and Denver areas. These events have addressed the U.S. Surgeon General's and economic prosperity.



Leadership Circle

Pillars of Authentic Leadership

LCDR Mark Durham

As Health Services Officers, we have had and will have numerous opportunities for leadership within our organizations amongst colleagues and those we serve. Service and Integrity are two of the four core values of our Commissioned Corps. Service is defined as, "Demonstrates a commitment to public health through compassionate actions and stewardship of time, resources, and talents." Integrity is defined as, "Exemplifies uncompromising ethical conduct and maintains the highest standards of responsibility and accountability." This article discusses four personal and professional traits to cultivate authentic leadership as Commissioned Corps officers.

Authentic leadership is the pursuit of developing the attributes of "self-awareness, internalized moral perspective, balanced processing, and relational transparency."¹ The authentic leader is genuine, due to conviction from past experiences. Authentic leadership is heavily influenced by ethics, knowledge and practice of the difference between good and bad, right and wrong. Leaders who are developed in authentic leadership tend to be selfless, making decisions for justice that improves the good of an individual or community. Having **confidence** means to hold self-efficacy, which is defined as one who believes that success in accomplishing tasks will occur. This confidence inspires the motivation needed in persistence toward success, regardless of the challenges and obstacles that develop.

Another motivating factor of authentic leadership is **hope**, which is based on goal planning and will power. Authentic leaders filled with hope make realistic goals that can be reached. This hope allows followers to believe in the authentic leader's direction – followers trust authentic leaders.

Optimism is defined as 'the cognitive process of viewing situations from a positive light and having favorable expectations about the future.'¹ Optimistic Authentic leaders have a positive perception of both their abilities and the outcomes they need to achieve. Instead of scarcity of belief leading to failure, optimistic authentic leaders have an abundance of belief in their future successes.

Resilience is described as the ability to overcome and adjust when obstacles pose a threat, difficulty, or even suffering. In adverse situations, resilient leaders recover from challenging troubles. Afterwards, a leader that overcomes dire circumstances feels more resourceful and strengthened due to the experience from the obstacles.

Developing these qualities of authentic leadership can take a lifetime of intentional pursuit. Clinical anecdote, hope is a highly effective combatant to depression and suicidal ideation. I want as much hope as I can attain so that it overflows into the lives of my colleagues and patients.

Source: Northouse, P. G. (2013). Leadership: Theory and Practice. Los Angeles, CA, USA: Sage Publications.

Leadership Circle

Leadership: Health and Wellness

CAPT Charlene Majersky

One of my top priorities in 2019 is to develop and implement an education and training program from the perspective of health and wellness. As a leader, I believe it's my fundamental responsibility to create and sustain a healthy work environment where employees have ample opportunities to grow and work toward being their best selves. The reality is that not all work environments and cultures are healthy and exhibit positivity. Stress is evident in the world. This is not breaking news or a novel notion. Add in chaos and confusion; the result is highly-stressed and unbalanced individuals. The truth is that stress exists; the key is how to manage it effectively and in a healthy manner, so it doesn't take control over you and your life. I offer four pragmatic suggestions for your consideration:

1. **Take excellent care of yourself in whole**, meaning spiritually, emotionally, and physically. This isn't being selfish; it's exercising wisdom in a deep and profound way because if you don't take care of yourself, it's difficult for you to take care of others.
2. **Develop a list of effective coping strategies for stress**. This is your go-to list for when the going gets tough. Having a list that is accessible to you is helpful because it's important to have something tangible and concrete to refer to that will help you shift from being in a state of high stress to decreasing and/or abating the stress. For example, taking a walk or engaging in another form of physical exercise, soaking in a warm bath, drinking a cup of green tea, calling a friend, listening to music that resonates with you, or writing your thoughts and feelings in a journal. Everyone's list will be different. It's imperative to find modalities that work for you.
3. **Practice mindfulness daily** is an excellent tool because it has numerous value-added benefits. For example, calming your mind and exhibiting clarity can help you to move more seamlessly into the next phase, which is to discern what direction to take. Meditation is a technique that can help you to cultivate calm, clarity, and loving-kindness into your life.
4. **Set healthy boundaries and limits**. If you say no, it doesn't mean you're not being a team player. Saying no without feeling guilty can be a challenge. Getting burnt out doesn't serve anyone well.

Sometimes if we aren't able to help ourselves, we might need to ask for professional help. This is not a sign of weakness or failure; instead, it's a sign of courage and strength. Give yourself credit for trying, and don't criticize yourself, because it will only make you feel worse. To reiterate, asking for help is a form of taking care of yourself in a positive way.

In conclusion, stress is a natural part of life. We are capable of not allowing stress to take control over us and our lives, if we practice our individual stress management techniques. Addressing a stressful situation affords you an opportunity to change that moment in time, to shift to more skillful ways of dealing with the stress.

Managing stress in a healthy way aids in our overall health and well-being, as we continue on our journey to becoming our best selves. Cheers to optimal health and wellness!



CAPT Charlene Majersky

Leadership Circle

The 5 Skills of Highly Empathic Leaders

CAPT Dwayne Buckingham

In today's competitive business environment, leaders cannot successfully accomplish their mission or propel their organizations to the next level without retaining employees who are satisfied with their work environments. However, retaining productive and high-spirited employees has been identified as one of the most challenging human resource issues in the workplace. Due to the increased pressure on leaders to motivate employees to produce measurable outcomes and profits, executives have spent millions of dollars developing and implementing task-completion training programs for their leadership. And while task-completion training is an important factor for an organizations' success, it is problematic for leaders and employees alike because it contributes to increased job dissatisfaction, high turnover, burnout, low morale and decreased productivity.

Many human relations experts agree that employees who feel understood and appreciated typically perform well, enjoy coming to work and develop healthy relationships with others on the job. Therefore, executive leadership depends on senior managers and front-line supervisors to be courageous enough to challenge and change workplace conditions that threaten their employees' ability to perform at high levels with optimism. Leaders at all levels of management must learn not to rest solely on their ability to apply mission-focused strategies but on their ability to correctly analyze employees' emotional disposition in the workplace.

Understanding and empathizing with how employees think and feel is critical if leaders desire to provide employees with the emotional, intellectual and social support needed to be their best at work and in life. The 5 Skills of Highly Empathic Leaders are designed to govern leadership behavior and effectiveness in enhancing employees' morale and increasing their productivity.

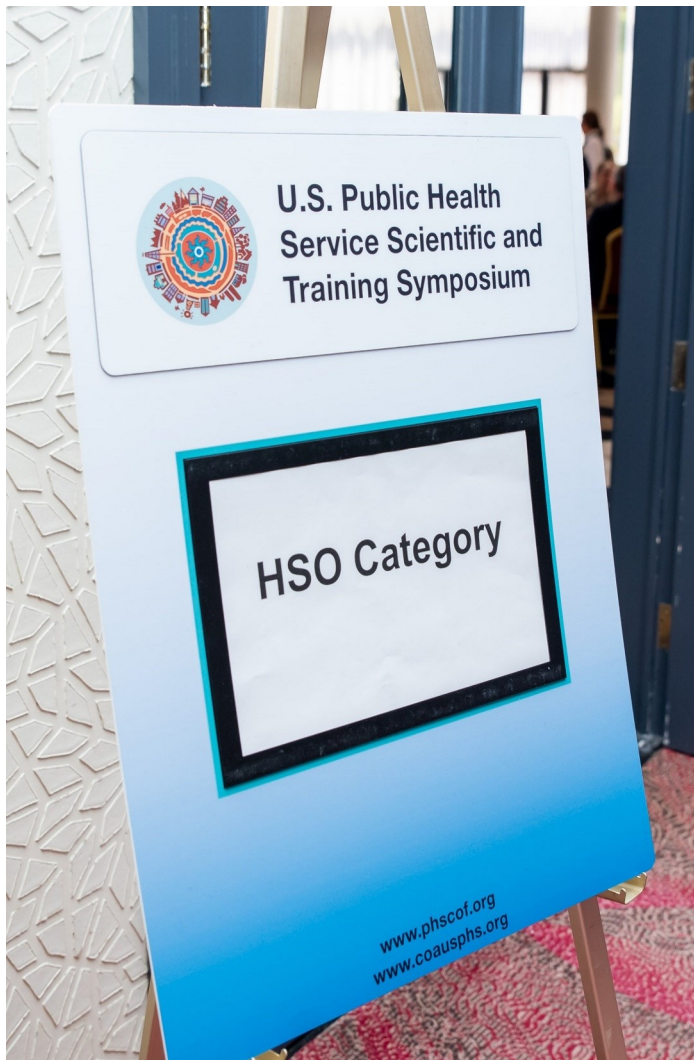
1. **Lead in a Righteous Manner.** Evaluate your moral compass and lead with good intentions, conduct and dignity. Treat your employees justly.
2. **Suspend Judgment.** Monitor your biases and celebrate individuality. Recognize and demonstrate your appreciation.
3. **Seek to Understand.** Engage in empathic listening and encourage two-way dialogue.
4. **Acknowledge Subjective Experiences.** Validate emotions and show compassion for employees to feel safe, understood, and accepted.
5. **Maintain a Collaborative Spirit.** Help resolve distress by engaging in brainstorming activities and offering support and guidance.

When righteous leaders suspend their judgment, they treat their employees justly so that they can recognize and appreciate their individuality. The only way for a leader to understand their employees is through demonstrating their compassion and encouraging dialogue. All these qualities will lay the ground work to becoming an empathic leader. With the incorporation of a collaborative spirit to promote team work, leaders will successfully boost morale or productivity at any work place.



CAPT Dwayne Buckingham

Highlights from the 2019 USPHS Scientific & Training Symposium



Highlights from the 2019 USPHS Scientific & Training Symposium



Highlights from the 2019 USPHS Scientific & Training Symposium



Highlights from the 2019 USPHS Scientific & Training Symposium



2019 HSPAC and PAG Awards

Congratulations to our 2019 award recipients! We are pleased to announce 2019 HSPAC and PAG award recipients. After going through a competitive review process, these officers were selected based on their contributions to the advancement of public health, demonstrated leadership in their work, and their dedication to the mission of the HSPAC and their respective PAGs.

	Award Name	Recipients
HSPAC	Stanley J. Kissel Senior Award	CDR Carlos Bell
	Joseph Garcia Junio Award	LCDR Charles Brucklier
	Responder of the Year	CDR Jonathan White
BASPAG	Senior Officer of the Year	CDR Tina Smith
DHPAG	Candace M. Jones Dental Hygienist of the Year	LCDR Sean McMahan
	Junior Hygienist of the Year	LCDR Jamie Martinez
HAPAG	Senior Officer Excellence in Healthcare Leadership	CDR Keisha Bayne
	Junior Officer Excellence in Healthcare Leadership	LCDR Shaun Chapman
HITPAG	Senior Officer of the Year	CDR Francis Bertulfo
	Junior Officer of the Year	LT Stephanie Chiang
MILSPAG	Senior Officer of the Year	CDR Cara Nichols
	Junior Officer of the Year	LT Sher coda Smaw
	Edward Hamilton Award	CDR Ryan Manning
OPAG	Richard Hatch Junior OD of the Year	LT Matt Geiger
	Lester Caplan Award	Ms. Chelsia Park
PAPAG	RADM Epifanio "Epi" Elizondo Senior Physician Assistant of the Year	CDR Tracy Branch
	RADM Michael R. Milner Junior Physician Assistant of the Year	LCDR Joseph Newcomb
PHPAG	Excellence in Leadership	CDR Douan Kirivong
	Junior Officer of the Year	LCDR Jennifer Clements
PsyPAG	Senior Psychologist of the Year	CDR Julie Chodacki
	Junior Psychologist of the Year	LCDR Adriana Restrepo
SWPAG	Senior Social Worker of the Year	CDR Dan Stanley
	Junior Social Worker of the Year	LCDR Dustin Bergerson

Announcements



Are you interested in contributing to the next issue of the HSPAC Quarterly Newsletter?

Submit articles and photos to:
Communications.HSPAC@gmail.com

When submitting articles, be sure to include:

- "Article" in the subject line.
- A descriptive title for the article.
- 1-2 high quality photos with captions to help tell your story. Photos should be in .jpeg or .png files.

Articles should be no longer than 1 page in length.

Special Thanks to the HSPAC Newsletter Team and Contributors!

2019 HSPAC Newsletter Team

Lead: LCDR Kelly Leong
Co-Lead: CAPT Douan Kirivong
Project Manager: LCDR Neal Kimble
Editors: CDR Keisha Bayne
CDR Kara Lampasone
LT Jennifer Enigk



New HSPAC Coin is Now Available!

If you are interested in purchasing the new HSPAC coin, visit [HSPAC Coins website](#) for more information.

Events and HSPAC Social Media



Have an HSPAC event? Please send a calendar invite to Calendar.HSPAC@gmail.com with all pertinent information and a point of contact so we can post your event on our calendar.



Follow us on Instagram @USPHS_HSPAC and Twitter @ PHS_HSPAC and tag us in photos of HSO in Action.

Connect with us:



<https://dcp.psc.gov/osg/hso/>



hspac.usphs@gmail.com



<https://dcp.psc.gov/OSG/hso/calendar.aspx>



<https://www.facebook.com/groups/HSO.HSPAC/>



https://www.instagram.com/usphs_hspac/



https://twitter.com/PHS_HSPAC



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MAFgNP->